



Division Description

The Office of Education works closely with local education agencies, high-quality pre-early education providers, school districts, non-profits, community groups, businesses, and organizations devoted to education and after school programming.

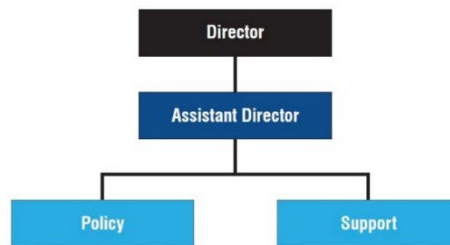
Instrumental to the Mayor's strategic priorities in the areas of early education and kindergarten readiness, the Office of Education has expanded pre-kindergarten services to over 70,000 children in Columbus over the past 11 years. In addition, the Office of Education is assisting Future Ready Five with the implementation of Future Ready by 5, a comprehensive prenatal to five strategic plan for Columbus and Franklin County.

Division Mission

To enable all Columbus children to succeed in its vibrant and growing economy and to develop into a highly skilled, creative, entrepreneurial workforce that will propel economic growth in the 21st century. The department will leverage the resources of the entire community to meet these goals.

Programs that support Columbus neighborhoods, including the Hilltop and Linden, have been developed and are being advanced by the Office of Education. The Hilltop Early Learning Center supports approximately 240 children and their families, and through a partnership with Columbus City Schools, the Office of Education will again provide funding for approximately 100 Linden pre-kindergarten students.

Budget Summary				
Fund	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Proposed
General Fund	14,213,103	14,669,100	13,661,495	12,454,747
Department Total	\$14,213,103	\$14,669,100	\$13,661,495	\$12,454,747



2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

SAFETY

Provide safe spaces for Columbus youth to learn and grow after the school day through two comprehensive programs, the Middle School After School Program and the After School Grant Program.

Integrate evidence-based social-emotion learning curriculum into academic, sports, and recreational programing so that youth learn to control emotions, de-escalate disputes, and resolve conflicts.

PROSPERITY

Provide children with access to high-quality early education. Screenings for delays in learning, health, development, and referrals to professionals if delays are determined.

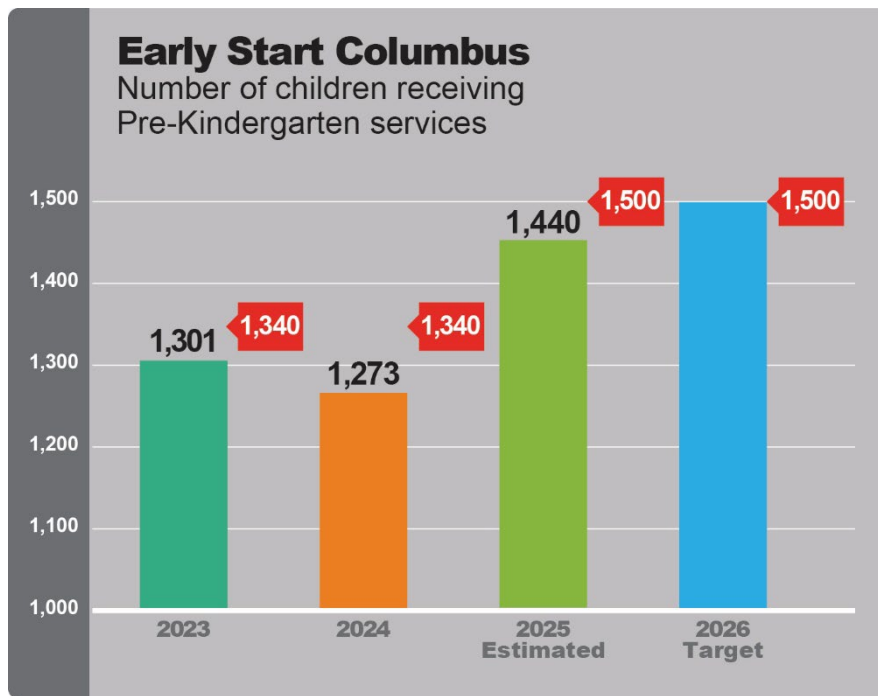
Assure that children have access to quality behavioral health care through partnership work with Early Start Columbus, Summer Success, and Future Ready Five.

2026 BUDGET NOTES

In alignment with the Mayor's goals for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, the Office of Education's budget of \$12,454,747 includes funding for two full-time regular employees. In addition:

- The 2026 budget includes a total of \$2.4 million allocated for after-school programming targeting middle-school-aged youth.
 - A total of \$9,352,700 is allocated for the Early Start Columbus Initiative. This community-wide effort focuses on preparing four-year-old children for kindergarten by expanding access to high-quality pre-kindergarten opportunities and collaborating with local providers to enhance the quality of early childhood educational programming. This year's proposed appropriation is targeted to serve 1,500 children.
 - The After-School Grants program is funded at continuation levels with amounts budgeted to help support a variety of recreational and educational activities in safe places throughout the community for the city's children to utilize after the school bell rings.
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PERFORMANCE MEASURE



Early Start Columbus is the Office of Education's program that expands the number of pre-kindergarten slots available to Columbus children and increases the quality of the programs in which Columbus children attend. This expansion is aligned with the Mayor's goal of universal access to a high-quality pre-kindergarten education for every four-year old in Columbus. The opening of the Hilltop Early Learning Center expanded the number of children served by Early Start Columbus significantly. The office's 2026 goal is to serve 1,500 students.

Financial Summary by Area of Expense

Division	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed
Education					
General Fund					
Personnel	\$ 281,397	\$ 255,791	\$ 345,824	\$ 337,551	\$ 342,850
Materials & Supplies	3,318	-	7,000	-	2,000
Services	13,918,388	13,243,309	13,138,671	12,690,481	11,745,514
Other	10,000	1,170,000	170,000	782,740	364,383
General Fund Subtotal	14,213,103	14,669,100	13,661,495	13,810,772	12,454,747
Department Total	\$14,213,103	\$14,669,100	\$13,661,495	\$13,810,772	\$12,454,747

Department Personnel Summary

Fund	2023 Actual		2024 Actual		2025 Budget		2026 Proposed	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
General Fund								
Education	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
Total	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0

Operating Budget by Program				
Program	2025 Budget	2025 FTEs	2026 Proposed	2026 FTEs
Administration	\$ 731,597	2	\$ 345,850	2
Early Start	10,366,920	0	9,352,700	0
After-School Grants	2,389,819	0	2,389,819	0
Internal Services	3,159	0	1,995	0
Summer Youth Employment and Programming	170,000	0	364,383	0
Department Total	\$13,661,495	2	\$12,454,747	2

2026 PROGRAM GUIDE

ADMINISTRATION

To increase the overall educational attainment in the City of Columbus and to support the recommendations of the Columbus Education Commission.

EARLY START

To achieve the Mayor's vision of universal access to pre-kindergarten services for all four-year-olds in Columbus.

AFTER-SCHOOL GRANTS

To provide safe after-school environments for Columbus kids to continue their education at the end of the school day.

INTERNAL SERVICES

To account for the internal service charges of the department necessary to maintain operations.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRAMMING

To guide youth to achieve personal goals and prepare for career paths through empowerment, education, and employment opportunities.

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